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IAC-D-50/5.1
11 June 1956

INTELLIGENCE REQUIREMENTS AND COLLECTION TASKS IN
RELATION TO PRIORITY NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE --

DCID 4/5

25 May 1956

1. You requested that, in collaboration with representatives of IAC agencies, I conduct a review of the existing provisions for the development and coordination of information requirements and collection tasks in conformity with established Priority National Intelligence Objectives. This was explained to the IAC in IAC-D-50/5, 20 January 1955.

2. Description of the existing provisions:

a. Priority National Intelligence Objectives, as approved by the IAC and noted by the NSC, authorize the fundamental direction which the community's intelligence production and collection efforts should take. They do not, however, serve as the sole or exclusive guide to the work of either research or collection offices, each of which devotes a portion of its effort to meeting "departmental" intelligence needs. These "departmental" intelligence needs coincide in many instances with the needs expressed in the Priority National Intelligence Objectives.

b. In the course of research to meet Priority National Intelligence Objectives and departmental needs, research offices ascertain gaps in available information which require collection action to fill. Such research will in certain fields be subject to some coordination: for atomic energy thru JAEIC; for science and technology, SEC; for guided missiles, GMIC; for economics, EIC; and for basic intelligence, NIS. Such committees have in the past engaged in some coordination of requirements, most usefully in regard to those requirements rating a high priority. Requirements thus endorsed are translated into requests for collection action by the agency responsible for the research.

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c. Available to all research offices are "Requirements Officers" who serve as middlemen between research and collection components. Their services are essential because of the size and complexity of our intelligence system which makes extensive direct individual contact between analysts and collectors administratively unfeasible. It is the function of these Requirements Officers to insure (a) that Washington resources have been exploited before requests are sent to the field; (b) that the desired information is expressed in the form most clearly understandable and usable by the collector(s); and (c) that the request for information does not duplicate other requests. It must be remembered that the research officer is responsible for determining the substance of the information desired. The Requirements Officer can contribute thru his understanding of research needs and collection machinery and capabilities and can frequently suggest other informational needs and other possible sources. The need expressed by the analyst in turn depends upon the research tasks to which he has been assigned. It should also be noted that the "coordination" performed by these Requirements Officers is essentially limited to requests originating within their own research components.*

d. The collection offices of the IAC agencies also include "requirements" elements whose task it is to act as a focal point in dealing with research components and further to insure that any given requirement does not duplicate one

* Requirements emanating from the research components of CIA, or submitted from any part of the intelligence community to a CIA collection facility are subjected to a further "coordination" by the Office of Central Reference. This office reviews the selection made by the research office of the collector most appropriate to obtain the desired information, makes a determination of the collector to be requested to assume the responsibility and insures that a request does not unprofitably duplicate other requests already levied.

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which has already been received and acted upon. They are usually a part of the collecting offices reports machinery which engages in a cyclical system of requirements, reports, and evaluations. It should be noted that these officers do not decide if collection will be undertaken. That is a command decision of collection supervisors, depending upon the capacity to collect and his other responsibilities.

3. The above outline delineates the general procedure by which the need of an analyst for information is transmitted to a collector whose task it is to obtain the information. There are, of course, exceptions and special interagency arrangements have been established which permit decisions on priorities for collection as limited resources might require: USCIB and IPC.

4. In considering the problem posed in IAC-D-50/5 in the light of the procedures generally followed by the intelligence community as outlined above, certain lines of inquiry are explored below:

a. A review of the existing provisions for the development and coordination of information requirements in conformity with Priority National Intelligence Objectives is not concerned basically with the activities of requirements officers attached either to research or to collection elements since these officers do not have the primary responsibility for determining the substance of requirements, or whether collection will be undertaken. Rather, it is their task to establish efficient and effective arrangements to those collectors who may be able to meet the need expressed in the requirements. Such a review, rather, must directly involve the administration and management of research components, since the substance of requirements stems principally from the tasks assigned the research components by their chiefs and the collection of information finally depends on the inherent capabilities and the administration of the collection facilities. In other words, the degree to which requirements are "developed and coordinated" in conformity with Priority National Intelligence Objectives depends upon the degree to which the tasks undertaken by the research components have been developed and coordinated in conformity with the Objectives.

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b. In the present framework of the intelligence community, collection tasks, developed in accordance with the needs of the research components, are allocated to collectors within certain areas of responsibility in keeping with the NSCIDs (NSCID 2, 5, 7 etc.) and DCIDs. The individual collection office, acting within the sphere assigned to it by appropriate directives, endeavors to meet the needs expressed to it by research offices translating requirements into requests for collection action by the responsible agency. A review of the "development of collection tasks" thus again leads back to a review of the administration and direction given to research components, from which derive the needs which collectors try to meet.

c. Collection offices do not and in the nature of things cannot concentrate all their efforts, plan their activities, and strive to build their resources toward meeting Priority National Intelligence Objectives. Each collection facility has been allocated a definite sphere of responsibility by NSCID, and must operate within that sphere. External considerations place definite limitations upon each collector. The Department of State, for example, is responsible for overt collection overseas of political information. If requirements stemming from research to meet Priority National Intelligence Objectives were the primary or only factor governing the allocation of the political reporting resources of the Department, the distribution of overseas personnel of the Foreign Service would be vastly different from what it actually is. In reality, however, the Department's allocation of resources is dictated by such factors as the limitation on the number of diplomatic personnel who can be stationed at posts behind the Iron Curtain, limitations on the useful information which such personnel are able to collect, and by other demands for political information not related to Priority National Intelligence Objectives. FI provides an equally striking example of the same phenomenon. A substantial portion of FI resources are necessarily allocated to areas and activities which, though not directly

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related to Priority National Intelligence Objectives produce information of use in important research of lower over-all priority.

5. The above considerations lead to the conclusion that the allocation of effort within his collection resources to various tasks is a command decision by the Chief of each collection facility, in the light of all the factors affecting the capabilities and limitations of the facility, as well as all of the requirements placed upon it.

6. Insofar as collectors are faced with competition for their capabilities, they might well inquire of the originator of the requirements whether they are identifiable as supporting PNIOs and if so, which PNIO. This procedure has, in fact, been applied thru the IPC and to a certain extent the USCIB.

7. NSCIDs and other directives specify areas of responsibility among collectors, either by subject area (NSCID 2, 10), or by method of collection (NSCID 5, 7). NSCID 2 and DCID 2/1 provide a mechanism for coordinating overt collection tasks overseas. With regard to the coordinating responsibility assigned to Chiefs of Mission overseas by DCID 2/1, the Department of State has, over the years, endeavored to insure that coordination is effected thru procedures appropriate to each post. As a result of these efforts, DCID 2/1 is now, in general, being implemented in a reasonably satisfactory manner. The IAC agencies under the leadership of the Department of State have in the last two years sent instructions to their representatives urging coordination of collection requirements as received in the field in order to obtain maximum benefit from the capabilities available. The replies give evidence that the field is complying with those instructions. I do not believe a further review of overseas coordination, as it pertains to the problem at hand, is required. NSCID-5 places upon the DCI responsibility for coordinating overt and covert collection activity. This is accomplished for the DCI principally in the field thru coordination b [REDACTED] and the representatives of other agencies, and at headquarters by CIA not accepting for clandestine collection by CIA requirements which can be obtained thru overt means.

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8. At the outset of its Post Mortem experience the IAC requested that the members prepare a single report on actions they had taken in pursuance of a Post Mortem. This was done in the case of China--SE 27 (for report see IAC-D-57/1). Thereafter and in lieu thereof, the agencies have been asked in response to each Post Mortem to take such action within their own spheres of responsibility as they deem appropriate. It is presumed that "such action" initially means research with requirements for collection following as necessary. While the original procedure might be profitably reinstituted it would not be responsive to the problem at hand inasmuch as the requirements emerging from Post Mortems are not necessarily, and in many cases are not, in line with PNIOs. Post Mortem review is only one of the measures taken by research offices to initiate appropriate action to fill gaps which become obvious in the course of research. The re-establishment of the original Post Mortem procedure is not recommended as a means of making collection more responsive to PNIOs.

9. There is a possibility that the IAC might establish a subcommittee to expand the PNIOs into an IAC approved requirements list in an effort to insure that requirements are indeed responsive to PNIOs. However, valid requirements cannot be developed in a vacuum; they must relate to an actual research need. The subject areas regarding which the IAC agencies can usefully coordinate their research programs (and thus their requirements) in terms of PNIOs have already been identified and subcommittees established, and additional coordination can be directed by the IAC as needed. It is believed unnecessary and unwise to try to effect "coordination" where a major overlap of interests does not exist.

10. Each agency or research component thereof has stated that its research program is responsive to PNIOs. Such programs will be affected as changes occur in national problems as reflected by needs of the NSC, its Planning Board, or individual operating agencies, as well as by revisions of the PNIOs. A new IAC subcommittee either to coordinate research programs over-all or to insure that research programs are responsive to PNIOs is not recommended.

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11. Summary Conclusion: That no new provisions are required for the development and coordination of information requirements and collection tasks in conformity with DCID 4/5.

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